

**Testimony of Commissioner Joseph F. Marie**  
**Department of Transportation**  
**Appropriations Committee**  
**February 9, 2009**

Good afternoon Chairwoman Harp, Chairman Geragosian and members of the Appropriations Committee. I am Joseph F. Marie, Commissioner of the Department of Transportation. It has been seven months since I joined the DOT and I am pleased to appear before you today to discuss Governor M. Jodi Rell's recommended biennial operating budget for the Department of Transportation.

My focus so far has been making sure the right people are in the right place, and I am happy with the progress we have made. I am committed to fostering an organization that is focused on results and performance.

There is still much to do, but we are committed to getting the job done and done right ... and Governor Rell's budget will get us there. Like you, we are awaiting the details and final action on the President's economic stimulus package, which, we are confident, will keep everyone moving forward.

The Department is in the process of evaluating all expenditures to ensure that every dollar spent is absolutely critical to our mission. As I indicated, I want a performance driven agency, with an emphasis on setting goals, measuring performance and a commitment to accountability and transparency.

Our transportation infrastructure – our roads, bridges, ports, airports, buses, ferries, and trains – are essential to the economic well being of our state and our nation. In order to address the challenges in front of us and allow our citizens to prosper . . . our transportation system, while fundamentally safe and productive, must be preserved, strengthened and enhanced.

The DOT has been challenged considerably in recent years. We want to and do learn from these experiences, and are continually working to improve, and, in fact, have recently completed a performance metrics report, which I will talk more about in a few minutes, that will help to ensure our continued improvement.

I've been impressed by the many hard-working people at the DOT and we do many things very well. We have recently completed a new Mission Statement for the agency, and the vision and values set forth in that Mission are aimed at customer service, accountability, and excellence. We can and are striving to always do better.

Our priority list is long and all of this is taking place during a time when the cost of doing what we do is colliding with an economic crisis never witnessed before.

It will mean tough choices ahead for our state and the nation. I can tell you that we are not alone. I have had the chance to talk with many of my peers from around the country and we have a lot of company.

Many would argue that the state of our nation's infrastructure has also reached crisis mode. In our state, the average age of our bridges is more than 50 years old and ranks as one of the highest in the nation for age of bridges.

Let me touch upon a few additional issues we're addressing:

- Process Improvement Initiatives (municipal agreements)
- Performance Metrics Report (first comprehensive review)
- Improving Transparency (new web site – project updates)
- Improving Communications (stakeholder/partnering meetings)
- Strengthening Project Delivery (Engineering & Construction Bureau)
- Ridership Increases on our Public Transit System
- Improving our sense of ownership and stewardship (QA initiative)

Governor Rell's recommended Special Transportation Fund appropriations of \$527.2 million for fiscal year 2010 and \$545.8 million for fiscal year 2011 provides the Department with the necessary resources to accomplish our mission.

Maintaining existing transit services is a key element of the Department's operating budget. This budget proposes to accomplish this without raising fares. The Governor's recommended budget includes funding for bus and rail transit services of \$244.2 million in fiscal year 2010 and \$260.7 million in fiscal year 2011. Funding for transit services has been the fastest growing element of the Department's budget, and these two programs serve the mobility needs of over 74 million passengers annually. (According to a 2007 AASHTO report, Connecticut's per capita investment in public transit is the highest in the nation – more than \$250 per person.)

The Governor's recommended Capital Program also includes new Special Tax Obligation Bond Authorizations for bond issuance and reserve costs each year of \$861.3 million for Department projects in fiscal year 2010 and \$243.4 million for Department projects in fiscal year 2011. It is estimated that with these resources, the Department will leverage over \$2.1 billion in federal funds. This will result in over \$3.2 billion in transportation infrastructure investments during the biennium.

In the past four years, the Governor and the General Assembly have implemented the largest investment in Transportation in more than twenty years. I hope we can continue to work with you to provide and maintain the transportation system that the citizens of Connecticut deserve.

Thank you for your consideration and attention today, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.